

REHAB RIVIERA

Testing Vermont’s model to fight addictions

Can medicine-assisted treatment work here?
California is spending \$90 million to find out

By Teri Sforza
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The time for hand-wringing was over. Vermont Gov. Peter Shumlin took the podium in 2014 and delivered a state of the state speech devoid of the usual trappings.

“During the tenure of every governor, there are numerous crises,” he said. “The crisis I am talking about is the rising tide of drug addiction and drug-related crime. In every corner of our state, heroin and opiate drug addiction threatens us.” He rattled off statistics: Vermont clocked a nearly ninefold

increase in people seeking treatment for opioid addiction. Deaths from heroin overdoses had almost doubled over the previous year. Nearly 80 percent of the state’s prison population was addicted or incarcerated because of addiction. “The time has come for us to stop quietly averting our eyes from the growing heroin addiction in our front yards while we fear and fight treatment facilities

DRUGS » PAGE 8



MINDY SCHAUER — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Dr. Faried Banimahd explains the implant process to Michael Moreno, who has been using oxycodone since 2009 after he was stabbed.

THE SERIES

Journalists from the Southern California News Group have spent a good part of 2017 investigating and reporting on the drug rehab industry, from fraud to bad medicine to victims. The series continues:

TODAY: The opioid epidemic is pushing a growing number of doctors to use drugs to fight addiction. **SUNDAY:** A look at responses to our investigation, and ongoing problems related to rehab operations.

MARINE LIFE



After a mysterious die-off,

By Laylan Connelly
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It was like something out of a sea-side horror movie. Sea stars, once familiar and beautiful and iconic, suddenly had lesions covering their bodies, a sign that something was horribly wrong. Within a day, the stars with lesions started to melt, turning into globs of goo. And, soon after, any sea stars near them suffered the same gruesome fate.

“It’s a huge difference. ... A couple of years ago, you wouldn’t find any. I dove all the way as far as Canada, specifically looking for sea stars and found not a single one.”

— Darryl Deleske, aquarist for the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium

Within a day, the stars with lesions started to melt, turning into globs of goo. And, soon after, any sea stars near them suffered the same gruesome fate.

“They are coming back, big time,” said Darryl Deleske, aquarist for the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium in San Pedro.

“It’s a huge difference. ... A couple of years ago, you wouldn’t find any. I dove all the way as far as Canada, specifically looking for sea stars and

In all, from 2013 to 2014, millions of sea stars died, the largest known Sea Star Wasting Syndrome epidemic on record. The die-off spanned from British Columbia to the shores of Southern California down to Mexico. It was, and is, a mystery.

But now, marine scientists are looking in Southern California tide pools and seeing hope — in the form of millions of new, palm-sized sea stars.

SEA STARS » PAGE 2

ABOVE: Colorful starfish cling tight to the seafloor of a kelp forest in Monterey Bay. RIGHT: A healthy sea star clings to a rock at Crystal Cove.

COURTESY PHOTOS

SEA STARS ARE BACK



HEALTH TECH

A 21st century heart monitor

By Sandy Mazza
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A health revolution is in the works, and it’s coming right to your phone.

Researchers at USC and Caltech have developed a smartphone-based heart monitor that proved in early trials at City of Hope to be as effective at spotting early signs of heart failure as a Cardiac MRI.

An MRI costs an average of \$2,500 and requires a trip to a hospital or clinic. But this device, named Vivio and still in clinical trials, could be mass-produced much more cheaply, conveniently used at home, and could immediately share results with doctors digitally.

Niema Pahlevan, a 39-year-old assistant professor of aerospace engineering and mechan-

HEART » PAGE 10

INSIDE

Looking back, peeking forward

As the calendar for 2017 nears the last square, it’s time to ponder the past year and think about the future.

Our three-part series does just that.

Today, we offer the best photos of 2017, from raging flames in Corona to a rollicking rodeo in Norco.

Sunday will bring the year’s top moments in Inland pop culture, from actor Chris Pratt visiting Perris to fallen Hemet firefighters portrayed in a Hollywood movie.

The series ends Monday with a glimpse at what stories could make headlines in 2018, from how Inland cities handle marijuana to what could happen at the local ballot box.

LOCAL 1

COTTON BOWL



USC coach Clay Helton and the Trojans lost to Ohio State, 24-7, in the Cotton Bowl on Friday in Arlington, Texas, to finish the season at 11-3. **SPORTS 1**